IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

ANDREW R. PERRONG 1657 THE FAIRWAY #131 JENKINTOWN, PA 19046

Plaintiff

VS.

DNC SERVICES CORP.
D/B/A DEMOCRATIC
NATIONAL COMMITTEE
430 S. CAPITOL STREET SE
WASHINGTON, DC 20003
Defendant.

Case No.

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

COMPLAINT

Preliminary Statement

- 1. Plaintiff Andrew R. Perrong ("Plaintiff"), brings this action under the Telephone Consumer Protection Act ("TCPA"), 47 U.S.C. § 227, a federal statute enacted in response to widespread public outrage about the proliferation of intrusive, nuisance calling practices. *See Mims v. Arrow Fin. Servs.*, *LLC*, 132 S. Ct. 740, 745 (2012).
- 2. The Defendant in this action, the DNC Services Corp., which does business as the Democratic National Committee, orchestrated placing at least one illegal, campaign-related prerecorded "robocall" to the Plaintiff's telephone number.
 - 3. The Plaintiff never consented to receive such messages.

Parties

4. Plaintiff Andrew R. Perrong is a Pennsylvania resident, and a resident of this District.

5. Defendant DNC Services Corp., which does business as the Democratic National Committee, is a Political Action Committee (PAC) which is colloquially known as the Democratic Party. The PAC is headquartered in the District of Columbia.

Jurisdiction & Venue

- 6. The Court has federal question subject matter jurisdiction over these TCPA claims. *Mims v. Arrow Fin. Services, LLC*, 132 S. Ct. 740 (2012).
- 7. Venue is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(2) because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claim occurred in this District, as the automated messages to the Plaintiff were placed into this District.

The Telephone Consumer Protection Act

8. In 1991, Congress enacted the TCPA to regulate the explosive growth of the automated calling industry. In so doing, Congress recognized that "[u]nrestricted telemarketing... can be an intrusive invasion of privacy [.]" Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991, Pub. L. No. 102-243, § 2(5) (1991) (codified at 47 U.S.C. § 227).

The TCPA Prohibits all Automated Calls To Protected Numbers

- 9. The TCPA makes it unlawful "to make any call (other than a call made for emergency purposes or made with the prior express consent of the called party) using an automatic telephone dialing system or an artificial or prerecorded voice . . . to any telephone number assigned to a . . . paging service, cellular telephone service, specialized mobile radio service, or other radio common carrier service, or any service for which the called party is charged for the call." *See* 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A)(iii).
- 10. Congress singled out these services for special protection either because Congress realized their special importance in terms of consumer privacy and therefore protected them (as

in the case of cellular phones), or because the numbers are assigned to services, like Mr. Perrong's VoIP service, for which the called party is charged, thus shifting the cost of automated or prerecorded messages onto consumers. *See Barr v. Am. Ass'n of Pol. Consultants, Inc*, 140 S. Ct. 2335, 2363, (2020) (Gorsuch, J. & Thomas, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part).

- 11. According to findings by the Federal Communication Commission ("FCC"), the agency Congress vested with authority to issue regulations implementing the TCPA, such messages are prohibited because, as Congress found, automated or prerecorded messages are a greater nuisance and invasion of privacy than live ones, are costly, and are inconvenient.
- 12. The TCPA provides a private cause of action to persons who receive calls in violation of 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A). *See* 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3).
- 13. This cause of action applies to users of any one of the four protected services (pager, cellular, specialized mobile radio [i.e. radiotelephony locator beacons or dispatch systems], or another radio common carrier service [i.e. ship-to-shore or air-to-ground]), or any service, including residential, VoIP, and landline services, for which the called party is charged for the call. *See Perrong v. Victory Phones LLC*, No. CV 20-5317, 2021 WL 3007258, at *6 (E.D. Pa. July 15, 2021).
- 14. "Non-emergency prerecorded voice or autodialed calls to [the destinations enumerated in 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A)] are permissible only with the prior express consent of the called party." This includes political calls. *See* FCC Enforcement Advisory: *Tel. Consumer Prot. Act Robocall & Text Rules Biennial Reminder for Pol. Campaigns About Robocall & Text Abuse*, 31 FCC Rcd. 1940, 1941 n.6 (2016) [hereinafter FCC Advisory].
- 15. Importantly, this Court has already held that non-consensual, non-emergency calls placed using an ATDS or a prerecorded voice violate 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A), regardless of the

purpose of the call. *Victory Phones*, 2021 WL 3007258, at *6 (rejecting claim that non-commercial survey calls were exempt and holding that "[T]he operative language of the TCPA is unambiguous. Section 227(b)(1)(A) prohibits placing artificial and prerecorded voice calls to a variety of telephone numbers."). To hold otherwise would read the words "any person" and "any call" out of the statute. *See id*.

Factual Allegations

- 16. Defendant is a Political Action Committee (PAC), which does business as the Democratic National Committee and is colloquially known as the Democratic Party.
- 17. To generate support for Democrat candidates in the 2020 election, Defendant relied on prerecorded "robocalls."

The Calls to Mr. Perrong

- 18. Plaintiff Perrong is a "person" as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 153(39).
- 19. Plaintiff's telephone number (the "Number"), 215-725-XXXX, is on the National Do Not Call Registry and had been since 2017.
- 20. Despite this registration, the Defendant sent at least one prerecorded "robocall" to Plaintiff on November 2, 2020.
- 21. The Number was assigned to a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone service, which allows for voice calls to be placed over a broadband Internet connection.
- 22. That Number, which was assigned to a VoIP telephone service, was charged for each call it received.
 - 23. The VoIP telephone service for the Number was Anveo.
- 24. The service charged a ring charge of \$0.005 for the provision of Caller ID Name lookup information for each call placed to the Number, even if the call is not answered.

- 25. The service also charged a per-minute charge of \$0.004 per minute for voice charges for each minute of talk time, including voicemail time, for each call placed to the Number.
- 26. The Number was therefore "assigned to a . . . service for which the called party is charged for the call" and any calls placed to that number were subject to the restrictions enumerated in 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A)(iii).
- 27. Despite this, Defendant placed a pre-recorded call to the Number from the caller ID 202-953-5367 on November 2, 2020. The pre-recorded call was voiced by former president Barack Hussein Obama and an unknown female voice and stated:

"Hey! This is Barack Obama on behalf of the Democratic National Committee, urging you to (inaudible). Polls are open between 7 AM and 8 PM. Go to iwillvote.com/pa to find your polling location, or call 833-PA-VOTES. This election will determine America's future and Pennsylvania is 'gonna be close. Your vote matters. Let's choose hope over fear. Thanks!" "Paid for by the Democratic National Committee. 202-953-5367. Not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee."

Defendant's Use of an ATDS

- 28. In addition to using a message voiced using prerecorded means, the message was sent using an Automatic Telephone Dialing System (ATDS). As the Supreme Court recently clarified, the key feature of an ATDS is the capacity to store numbers to be called using a random or sequential number generator or to produce numbers to be called using a random or sequential number generator. *Facebook, Inc. v. Duguid*, 141 S. Ct. 1163, 1167 (2021).
- 29. The Third Circuit recently clarified that "Congress envisioned a broad understanding of 'equipment'" that constitutes an ATDS. It also clarified that the analysis of whether an ATDS was used in violation of the TCPA centers around "whether the defendant employ[s] [ATDS] capacities to make automated calls," *Panzarella v. Navient Sols., Inc.*, 37 F.4th 867, 873, 878 (3d Cir. 2022). In so doing, it held that Congress intended to "ban all

autodialed calls" because Congress "found autodialer technology to be uniquely harmful." *Id.* at 879 (cleaned up).

- 30. In enacting the ATDS prohibition, the Third Circuit cited favorably to Congressional understanding "that telemarketers could transform ordinary computers into autodialers through minor and inexpensive modifications," including by "relying on computerized databases containing telephone numbers during their dialing campaigns." *Id.* at 880 (cleaned up). The Third Circuit held that, in passing the TCPA's ATDS prohibition, Congress intended to remedy the problems caused by callers using computer software to dial numbers randomly or sequentially from a list or database. *See id.*
- 31. The system Defendant used to call Plaintiff is an ATDS because it would be illogical to manually type out a telephone number only to connect them to a pre-recorded message voiced by a former president, and it is illogical that such a person would make calls manually himself.
- 32. As this Court has remarked, other courts have held, post-*Facebook*, that allegations similar to those as here of the absence of a relationship between the parties, the lack of personalization in the messages, and the random or automated nature of the automation device, are all indicia of use of a random or sequential dialing device that gives rise to the inference at the pleadings stage that an ATDS was used to make the calls. *See Camunas v. Nat'l Republican Senatorial Comm.*, No. 21-1005, 2021 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 100125 at *11 (E.D. Pa. May 26, 2021).
- 33. No facts exist here to support the conclusion that Defendant was messaging a curated list of past individuals who they have previously interacted with. Plaintiff is not a liberal left-winger, a Democrat, nor interested in anything to do with them. By contrast to a company

that calls phone numbers *en masse* to the public, a company that messages its existing customers utilizing an imported customer list does not place calls using an ATDS because such calling uses a database targeting existing customers' information rather than computer-generated tables or lists of individuals to be called. *See Panzarella*, 37 F.4th at 881–882.

34. Plaintiff is ignorant of the exact process by which the system used by Defendant stores or produces telephone numbers sequentially or possibly randomly, as outlined above. Indeed, as at least one district court explained, "The newly clarified definition of an ATDS is more relevant to a summary judgment motion than at the pleading stage." *Gross v. GG Homes, Inc.*, No. 3:21-cv-00271-DMS-BGS, 2021 WL 2863623, at *7 (S.D. Cal. July 8, 2021); *accord Miles v. Medicredit, Inc.*, No. 4:20-cv-01186-JAR, 2021 WL 2949565 (E.D. Mo. July 14, 2021).

<u>Defendant's Conduct Violates the TCPA</u>

- 35. The Plaintiff never provided his consent or requested the call.
- 36. The call was not necessitated by any emergency.
- 37. Plaintiff was harmed by the call. He was temporarily deprived of legitimate use of his telephone and his privacy was improperly invaded. The Plaintiff was charged for the call. Moreover, it injured Plaintiff because it was frustrating, obnoxious, annoying, was a nuisance and disturbed the solitude of Plaintiff.

Legal Claims

Count One:

Violation of the TCPA's Prohibition Against Automated Calling Via Pre-Recorded Message

- 38. Plaintiff incorporates the allegations from all previous paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
- 39. The foregoing acts and omissions of Defendant and/or its affiliates, agents, and/or other persons or entities acting on Defendant's behalf constitute numerous and multiple

violations of the TCPA, 47 U.S.C. § 227, by sending calls, except for emergency purposes, to the telephone number of Plaintiff using a prerecorded voice.

- 40. As a result of Defendant's and/or its affiliates, agents, and/or other persons or entities acting on Defendant's behalf's violations of the TCPA, 47 U.S.C. § 227, Plaintiff is entitled to an award of \$500 in damages for each and every call made to his telephone number for which he is charged for the call using an artificial or prerecorded voice in violation of the statute, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(B).
- 41. Plaintiff is also entitled to and does seek injunctive relief prohibiting Defendant and/or its affiliates, agents, and/or other persons or entities acting on Defendant's behalf from violating the TCPA, 47 U.S.C. § 227, by making calls or sending messages, except for emergency purposes, to any number using an artificial or prerecorded voice in the future.
 - 42. The Defendant's violations were willful and/or knowing.

Count Two:

Violation of the TCPA's Prohibition Against Automated Messaging With an Automatic Telephone Dialing System (ATDS)

- 43. Plaintiff incorporates the allegations from all previous paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
- 44. The foregoing acts and omissions of Defendant and/or its affiliates, agents, and/or other persons or entities acting on Defendant's behalf constitute numerous and multiple violations of the TCPA, 47 U.S.C. § 227, by sending message(s), except for emergency purposes, to the telephone number(s) of Plaintiff using an ATDS.
- 45. As a result of Defendant's and/or its affiliates, agents, and/or other persons or entities acting on Defendant's behalf's violations of the TCPA, 47 U.S.C. § 227, Plaintiff is

entitled to an award of \$500 in damages for each and every call made to his telephone number

using an ATDS in violation of the statute, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(B).

46. Plaintiff is also entitled to and does seek injunctive relief prohibiting Defendant

and/or its affiliates, agents, and/or other persons or entities acting on Defendant's behalf from

violating the TCPA, 47 U.S.C. § 227, by making calls, except for emergency purposes, to any

number using an artificial or prerecorded voice in the future.

47. The Defendant's violations were willful and/or knowing.

Relief Sought

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff requests the following relief:

A. Injunctive relief prohibiting Defendant from calling telephone numbers using an

artificial or prerecorded voice and/or ATDS.

B. Because of Defendant's violations of the TCPA, Plaintiff seeks for himself \$500

in damages for each violation or—where such regulations were willfully or

knowingly violated—up to \$1,500 per violation, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. §

227(b)(3).

C. Such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Plaintiff requests a jury trial as to all claims of the complaint so triable.

Dated: November 4, 2022

Andrew R. Perrong
Plaintiff Pro-Se

1657 The Fairway #131 Jenkintown, PA 19046

Phone: 215-791-6957 Facsimile: 888-329-0305

andyperrong@gmail.com

JS 44 (Rev. 04/21)

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The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS 44

Authority For Civil Cover Sheet

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

- **I.(a) Plaintiffs-Defendants.** Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.
- (b) County of Residence. For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the "defendant" is the location of the tract of land involved.)
- (c) Attorneys. Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section "(see attachment)".
- II. Jurisdiction. The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Rule 8(a), F.R.Cv.P., which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an "X" in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below.

 United States plaintiff. (1) Jurisdiction based on 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here. United States defendant. (2) When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an "X" in this box. Federal question. (3) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked.

 Diversity of citizenship. (4) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; NOTE: federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.)
- III. Residence (citizenship) of Principal Parties. This section of the JS 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.
- IV. Nature of Suit. Place an "X" in the appropriate box. If there are multiple nature of suit codes associated with the case, pick the nature of suit code that is most applicable. Click here for: Nature of Suit Code Descriptions.
- V. Origin. Place an "X" in one of the seven boxes.
 - Original Proceedings. (1) Cases which originate in the United States district courts.

Removed from State Court. (2) Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 U.S.C., Section 1441. Remanded from Appellate Court. (3) Check this box for cases remanded to the district court for further action. Use the date of remand as the filing date.

Reinstated or Reopened. (4) Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date. Transferred from Another District. (5) For cases transferred under Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.

Multidistrict Litigation – Transfer. (6) Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1407.

Multidistrict Litigation – Direct File. (8) Check this box when a multidistrict case is filed in the same district as the Master MDL docket. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE IS NOT AN ORIGIN CODE 7.** Origin Code 7 was used for historical records and is no longer relevant due to changes in statute.

- VI. Cause of Action. Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause. **Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity.** Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC 553 Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service.
- VII. Requested in Complaint. Class Action. Place an "X" in this box if you are filing a class action under Rule 23, F.R.Cv.P.

 Demand. In this space enter the actual dollar amount being demanded or indicate other demand, such as a preliminary injunction.

 Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.
- VIII. Related Cases. This section of the JS 44 is used to reference related pending cases, if any. If there are related pending cases, insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judge names for such cases.

Date and Attorney Signature. Date and sign the civil cover sheet.

Case 2:22-cv-04472-GENTED SPOCKES DISTRICT INCOME. Page 12 of 12 FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

DESIGNATION FORM

(to be used by counsel or pro se plaintiff to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to the appropriate calendar)

Address of Plaintiff:165	57 THE FAIRWAY #131, JENKIN	TOWN, PA 19046			
Address of Defendant: 430 S.	CAPITOL STREET SE WASH	HINGTON, DC 20003			
Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction:	D) / TT! TD! Q				
RELATED CASE, IF ANY:					
Case Number:	Judge:	Date Terminated:			
Civil cases are deemed related when Yes is answered	d to any of the following questions:				
1. Is this case related to property included in an earlier numbered suit pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?					
2. Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a prior suit pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?					
3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any earlier numbered case pending or within one year previously terminated action of this court?					
4. Is this case a second or successive habeas corpu case filed by the same individual?	is, social security appeal, or pro se civil rights	Yes No 🗸			
I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case this court except as noted above.					
DATE: 11/04/2022	Must sign here				
	Attorney-at-Lenr/ Pro Se Plaintiff	Attorney I.D. # (if applicable)			
CIVIL: (Place a $$ in one category only)					
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